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MESSIANIC PROPHECY IN THE BOOK OF JOB.

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The book of Job contains no direct allusion to the hope of Israel, and to find anything therein referring to Christ may seem far-fetched and unwarranted. When, however, we read it in the light of New Testament story and doctrine, certain foreshadowings of our Saviour appear. The most obvious of these is that Job, as a representative of innocent suffering, is a type of the Messiah. The outlook of the author of Job, it is true, is broader than Israel; the experience which he gives is common to the entire race; and yet, since the book is of Hebrew literature, we believe the hero was designed especially to represent the afflicted godly of Israel, and the poem was primarily written for their consolation. It is an endeavor to set forth the problem suggested by the life of a Jeremiah or other faithful sufferers. Job, then, as a representative character stands in the same line with the innocent suppliant of the twenty-second Psalm, and the suffering Servant of Jehovah of the fifty-third of Isaiah. He represents that inner righteous kernel of Israel which forms the background or basis of these two celebrated passages. He shows us that the ideal servant of God triumphs through innocent suffering, and thus he foreshadows that which was perfectly realized in the suffering Son of Man.

The assurance of immortality is also given in this book. This is found in the well-known verses:

"But I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand up at last upon the earth and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself. Mine eyes shall behold and not another." (xix. 25-27, R.V.)

Here Job, arising above his previous doubt and despair, boldly declares that after death he shall behold God as his vindicator, his friend. The thought is parallel with that of Ps. xvi. 10sq.

There the beloved of God has full confidence that he shall not be abandoned in Sheol. In the next life the ties which have bound him to Jehovah will continue. Both of these passages are typically prophetic of Christ's resurrection, because that event fully realized the truth of their idea. Immortality, the real victory over death, became an accomplished fact on Easter morning.

Many find an intimation of the necessity of a mediator between God and man, and hence so far a promise of Christ in ix. 32 sq. :

"For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, that we should come together in judgment. There is no daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both."

It must be noticed, however, if such a conception is here taught, it has for its premise an unjust view of God. In the previous verses of this chapter, Job pictures God as a cruel and relentless persecutor, unjust and arbitrary. Job also never found peace with God through any intercessor or mediator apart from God himself, but he did find such a one in God. Job's friends failed him. They proved to be like a deceitful brook. Job's loyalty to God was put also to the severest test. The Almighty did seem against him, and Job's words were at first full of bitter complaint. But they were turned from complaint to supplication, and finally to confidence. He says:

"O earth cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no resting-place. Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that voucheth for me is on high." (xvi. 13 sq.)

"Give now a pledge, be surety for me with thyself." (xvii. 3).

In these passages Job draws a distinction in God. God will testify for him to God. God will give a pledge of his innocency to God. Here then is something parallel to what we find in the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity. "If any man sin," says John, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Job's passionate longing, "Oh that I knew where I might find him," (xxiii. 2 sq.) finds an answer and fulfillment in Christ's revelation of God. We know where to find him: "He that

hath seen me hath seen the Father.” The heart’s desires of the Old Testament are met and realized in the New,—not, however, completely, for the consummation of all has not yet taken place. There are prophetic longings and assurances still in the New Testament and in the hearts of God’s people. We look forward to a second coming of our Saviour who said, “I go to prepare a place for you. . .I come again and will receive you unto myself.” In that glad hour, whatever be its time or manifestation, all heart yearnings will be stilled, all contradictions solved, and all divine ideas, both of the Old and New Testament perfectly realized.